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Relatives of “hit and run” victim in Vieques collect alleged evidence and show reservations in the handling of the case

Two brothers of Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales assured that they have enough evidence for the Police and the Department of Justice to file a case against the person of interest.

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The relatives of Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales are conducting their own investigation to clarify his death in the face of what they indicated as inaction by the authorities. (Supplied)



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The family of **Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales** , the man who died on April 24 in a “hit and run” case registered in **Vieques** , collected, on their own, what they classify as sufficient evidence for charges to be filed against the person of interest.

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Part of the apparent evidence that Josué Cruz Morales and Río Cruz Morales, the victim's brothers, indicated they have includes: six witnesses; seven videos from security cameras from a short-term lodging; dozens of photos and videos from the scene; images of the crashed and abandoned car; the statement of an eyewitness to the events; and an alleged confession made to a police officer by the driver who allegedly fled.

And the brothers of Cruz Morales do not understand the reason why, despite having the supposed evidence of the facts, neither the Uniformed nor Justice have arrested the alleged driver who, after

hitting Carlos Alberto on the PR-997 highway , fled and then abandoned the vehicle.

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Josué and Río indicated that Carlos Alberto was driving his motorboat on the aforementioned road, known in Vieques as “the Sun Bay straight,” when he was hit by the driver of another vehicle. As they explained, Carlos Alberto left a bar after finishing his work as a tour guide in the bioluminescent bay.

“My brother was an extremely loved person in Vieques, he did not have any type of criminal record. He took excursions to the bioluminescent bay, that was his life and **that was what he did that night, he was taking an excursion, he finished, put away the kayaks and went to a bar called Lazy Jack, where they always meet after work** ” Josué recounted.



Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales, a resident of Vieques, lost his life last Wednesday, April 24, when he was hit by a hit-and-run driver. (Supplied)

"A friend of my brother's that we identified told us that she was there, at Lazy Jack, and at 11:50 at night she said 'black girl, I'm leaving

because I have to get up early.' According to what she and other witnesses told us, she only drank a beer, stayed for a little while and left," she added.

It was then, **while heading to his residence, that Cruz Morales was hit by a motor vehicle that did not stop at the scene and fled .**

Preliminarily, the Police confirmed that they identified the vehicle with which the hit and run was allegedly committed, and that a person of interest would be interviewed. **At that time, the Uniformed Police did not identify the person.**

However, the family members maintained that the person of interest and driver who allegedly hit Carlos Alberto with a rented Kia Soul bus has a criminal record in the United States.

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The alleged evidence collected

Carlos Alberto's brothers criticized the **alleged negligence of the authorities in the investigation of the case** , including the fact that they did not keep the person of interest in custody due to lack of expert evidence, according to what the Police told them. Authorities declined to reveal the name of the person of interest to **El Nuevo Día .**

Among the evidence collected by Josué and Río, organized in a digital file, there are allegedly seven security videos from the short-term rental residence where the apparent person of interest, along with two companions, was staying at the time of the attacks. facts. The videos supposedly show the man's movements before and after the time of the accident. **However, the brothers indicated that the owner of the lodging – a friend of the Cruz Morales family – told them that the Police have not shown interest in obtaining copies of the camera footage.**



Rented car that hit Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales last Wednesday, April 24 on a well-known highway in Vieques. (Supplied)

“It seems to us that these videos are an essential piece about this person's movements, what time he left, what time he arrived, the time he returned walking without the car, when he went back to the car with someone, probably to steal belongings. that he left in the car ,” said Josué.

In addition, the brothers indicated that **they identified an alleged witness to the events, a well-known community leader from Vieques who was driving on the PR-997 highway when the incident occurred .**

“This friend, whom we have known all our lives and who is someone very respected in the community, confirmed to me that he was there when the accident occurred. **Not only was he there, but he had been driving behind the car since he left Lazy Jack ,”** Josué added.

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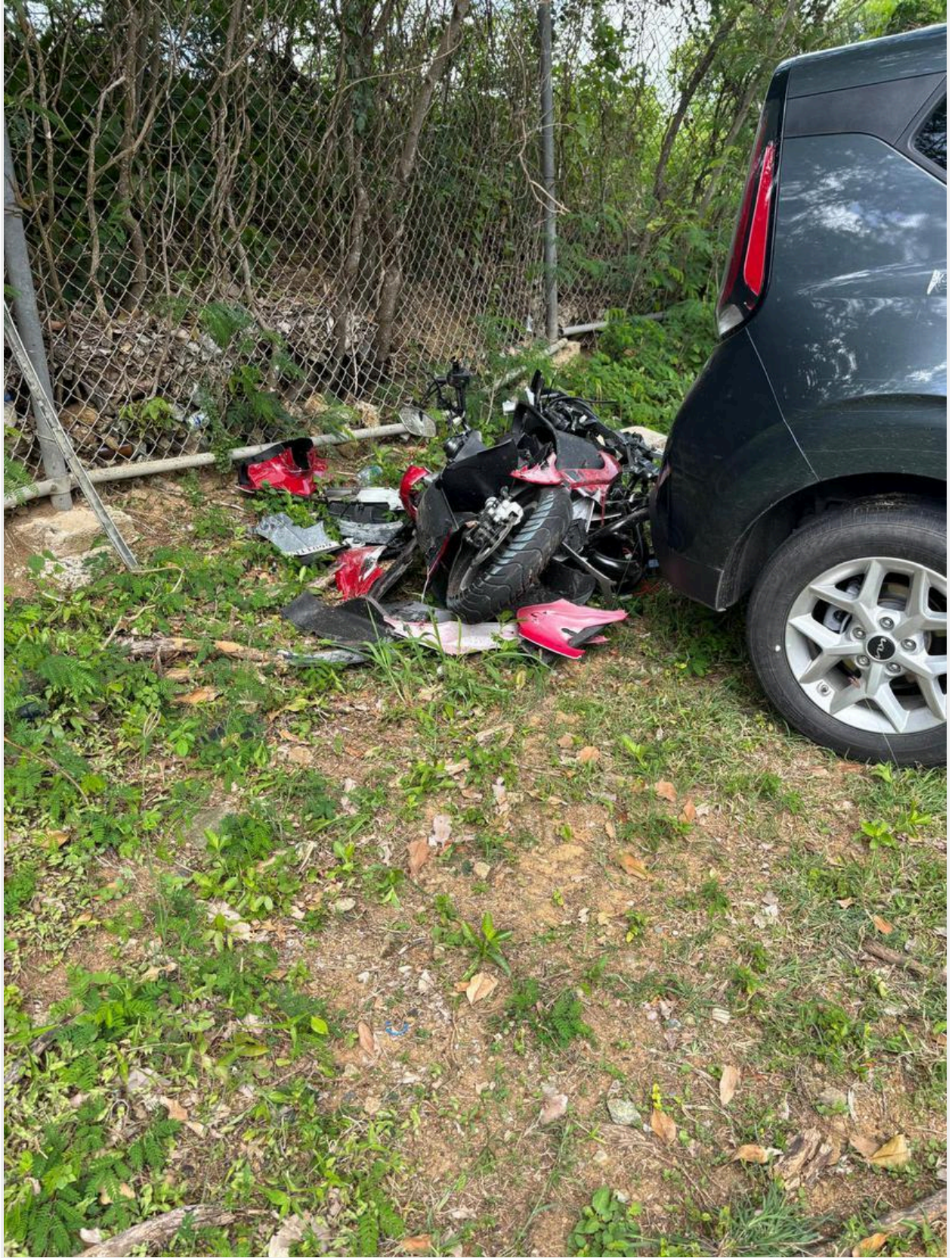
“This person tells us that the person was driving at an excessive speed along the boardwalk, and that he was even going to overturn on a curve. There, as he tells us, he took the curve towards the Sun Bay straight and there he overtook because he accelerated even more. **Then he saw that the car was zigzagging and he thought he had avoided a horse, but when he began to approach the place, he**

saw the helmet, the motorboat crashed against a post and then my brother's body lying on the pavement ," he said.

The brothers indicated that other Lazy Jack diners supposedly claimed to have seen the tourist in an alleged state of intoxication.

Furthermore, the pair of brothers assured that **agent Alexander Calderón, from the Criminal Investigation Corps (CIC) of Fajardo and who is in charge of the investigation, told them that the case was well advanced and "on the verge of candy ."**

"Calderón tells me that he quickly located the person, that they went looking for him and that the case was close to being made, well advanced . He told me that they interviewed him and initially he told them that he believed he had hit an animal and that's why he didn't stop and continued on his way. But, the agent told me that he managed to confront the tourist because the car that was found crashed and that was registered as having been rented by him, showed residue of hair and blood and then, according to the agent, he got scared and confessed that he had run over to my brother ," Josué emphasized.



Condition of the motorboat that Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales was driving at the time of being hit by

the vehicle. (Supplied)

"Then I asked the agent if this person had been arrested since there was a confession and he told me that no charges had been filed because they wanted to 'do it right' and corroborate that confession so that 'they wouldn't drop the case .' The agent indicated that the warnings were read to him, but that if he left the jurisdiction he would have to come if he was summoned," he explained.

According to witnesses, the person of interest left the rented car on a street in the Las Marías sector of Vieques, where it was located by police officers. However, there is no information as to whether the vehicle was seized as evidence.

“Well advanced” the investigation

El Nuevo Día attempted to obtain more information directly from agent Calderón who, when approached about the status of the investigation, responded that it was “well underway,” although he refused to give details and referred additional questions to his supervisors .

For her part, **Sergeant Glenda Méndez Noa**, supervisor at the **Fajardo CIC** , confirmed to this newspaper that they interviewed a person of interest, but declined to provide additional data.

“This person was interviewed and the prosecutor (Fernando) Quintero, from (the) Prosecutor's Office in Fajardo, who is the one who has the case, ordered to continue the investigation and later summon this person. **The investigation is still in process, we are still going to Vieques to continue with the expert information that is needed in relation to the evidence that was dealt with ,**” he said.

“**But, at the moment, there is no order to arrest this person. She is already identified, but we still do not have enough evidence to file a case. "If there is a person of interest who has already been interviewed and once the investigation is over, and the prosecutor instructs him, the case will be cited ,**” added Méndez Noa, who also did not reveal the identity of the person of interest.

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Similarly, another supervisor at the CIC in Fajardo, identified only as **Sergeant Pérez** , also confirmed that the person of interest was interviewed and that prosecutor Quintero remains in charge of the investigation. However, she said she was not aware that the person of interest allegedly confessed to having shocked Carlos Alberto.



Carlos Alberto Cruz Morales worked as a kayak excursion guide to the bioluminescent bay in Vieques. (Supplied)

“ That he confessed, I don't have that information, I don't know where that information came from. The gentleman was interviewed and prosecutor Quintero continues investigating . The warnings were read to him at that time, the other party to the incident was interviewed, but the preliminary investigation continues,” added Sergeant Pérez.

When asked if the person of interest could leave the island and evade the Police, Officer Pérez maintained that said person remains in Puerto Rico, but did not provide additional information .

El Nuevo Día tried to obtain a reaction from prosecutor Fernando Quintero, but the requests were not answered.

However, **Attorney Joan Hernández Marrero, press spokesperson for the Department of Justice** , assured **El Nuevo Día** that the investigation is still ongoing and stressed that investigations into accidents with motor vehicles require a lot of expert evidence before being submitted.

“ The case is under investigation by the Fajardo Prosecutor's Office. Cases of fatal crashes, or when a driver goes on the run, take time because they require extensive expert evidence. The Prosecutor's Office works its investigations confidentially so that the case is not affected and (to) guarantee the purity of the process. Once the determination is made and the case is presented, then the necessary information is disclosed, maintaining the confidentiality of the evidence,” he explained.

Hernández Marrero did not offer additional information about the case because it is an ongoing investigation.

The Justice spokesperson added that a person of interest cannot be detained for more than 36 hours without charges being filed .